



**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Devils Tower
National
Monument**

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DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL MONUMENT News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Devils Tower National Monument Climbing Management Plan Update Completed

The National Park Service (NPS) has reviewed and updated the Devils Tower National Monument 1995 Climbing Management Plan (CMP). Primary features of the CMP Update are an improved climber education program, safety standards, climbing access routes, as well as a continued June voluntary climbing closure.

The CMP Update process began with a public comment period held from May 15 to July 15, 2002, during which 39 comments (33 from individuals and 6 from organizations or companies) were received. A March 17, 2003 newsletter provided an update on the CMP Update process to interested parties. After considering the public response, comments received from affiliated Native American tribes and effects to resources, the NPS has selected the following actions for the CMP Update:

The Climber Education Program

An improved climber education program will continue to include a climbing ranger on staff and a dedicated climbing registration office with a climber education video. A climbing ranger will provide climbers more information and service. A dedicated climber registration office, new in 2005, will continue to provide a venue for more climber education contacts with a climbing ranger. A climber education video will be available in 2007 to increase climber awareness of safety, resource impacts and the Tower's cultural significance.

Safety Standards

The National Park Service will be requiring commercial guides to obtain professional certification that trains and tests guides for competency. This standard will improve safety for guided climbers which make up about 40% of Tower climbers.

Climbing Access Routes

Climbing access route maintenance will be completed to repair route erosion and eliminate social routes. Climbers will continue to be required to pack human waste off approach routes and the Tower. Human waste bag systems will continue to be sold at the bookstore in the visitor center.


June Voluntary Climbing Closure

The NPS will continue a voluntary climbing closure on Devils Tower during the month of June when many Native American traditional cultural activities occur at the Tower. This voluntary closure has been in effect each June since 1995 when the CMP was established.

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act, a review of the impacts caused by the CMP Update was performed by monument staff. This project is generally consistent with the environmental

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assessment prepared for the 1995 CMP, and for the new actions, impact levels are low. Therefore, an environmental assessment was not prepared for the CMP Update. Consequently, a categorical exclusion has been filed for the modifications to the commercial climbing guide permit. A copy of the CMP Update document can be downloaded at www.nps.gov/deto under “Management Docs”. For more information about the CMP Update, contact Scott Brown (scott_brown@nps.gov, 307-467-5283 x221) Chief Ranger for Devils Tower National Monument.

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